

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the EDUCATIONAL RECORD:—

Is there such a thing as a possessive case of the personal pronouns? I do not mind running my head against the grammarians and saying that there is not. Take for instance the first person. Its possessive case is certainly not "my," for that is an adjective, and must have a substantive to follow; it is as certainly not "mine," for although that is a true pronoun, it is only used in the nominative or objective case, according as it is in the direct or indirect completion of a verb. For instance; whose book did he take? He took mine. Here "took" is a transitive verb and governs an objective case. Again, whose is that book? It is mine. "Is" is a neuter verb and requires the nominative after it. Under no circumstances can "mine," "thine," etc., be parsed in the possessive case; neither can "my" supply that place to "I," for the former is an adjective, and the latter a true pronoun.

In studying the principles of what I may call a composite language, it is well to look at the nations from whom that language has been derived. The Latins had the personal possessive; in the instance I am taking, it was the inflectional "mei"; but in France it became an adjunct, and in England what is called the "Norman possessive," "de moi" and "of me"; the Latin adjective "meus" was "mon" and "ma" in French; "my" in English; but out of the masculine termination of the French adjective grew a veritable possessive pronoun. "Le mien" anglicé "mine," and this latter, like its French progenitor, can no more be used with a substantive than "my" which is descended from "ma" can be used without one. It requires very little argument to show that an "adjective pronoun" cannot possibly be the possessive case of a substantive one; it requires as little to prove that the pronoun "mine" cannot fill the situation. It has a possessive case of its own namely the "Norman" "du mien," "of mine," as evinced in our own language by the expressions "body of mine," "heart of mine"; and in more modern times, "This Canada of ours." Few men would venture to parse those pronouns as adjective ones belonging to some substantive understood; fewer still will call them personal pronouns in the possessive case *governed by a preposition*. But if neither "my" nor "mine" can fill the vacant position, what can? Hence, I have come to the conclusion that "my," etc., are adjectives; "mine," etc., possessive pronouns, and that the personal pronouns have no possessive case.

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